

Charge Questions

EPA Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC)

Overview of Climate Change and Social & Community Sciences Research Programs

June 2023

Process Notes for BOSC: The charge questions below are for BOSC subcommittee meetings this June that will report to the BOSC EC about the progress ORD has made in three areas: (A) social science research and social scientists; (B) climate science in ORD with a focus on the new Integrated Climate Science Division (ICSD); and (C) the development of interdisciplinary place-based, community-engaged research to address pressing issues (such as climate change, environmental justice, and cumulative impacts).

There will be two informational BOSC meetings (June 15, 20) each featuring the same set of presentations related to the three BOSC questions (below). EPA will ask a subset of the Social and Community Science subcommittee to draft a response to the first question; a subset of the Climate Change subcommittee to draft a response to the second question; and a combined subset from both the Social and Community Science and Climate Change subcommittees to draft a response to the third question. EPA anticipates that subsequent meetings of the subcommittees will be held in the Fall, where the draft responses will be reviewed by the relevant subcommittees prior to review by the BOSC EC.

Question A: Charge Questions for the BOSC Social and Community Science Subcommittee

ORD has continued to implement actions to build social science capacity and integrate social sciences into the overall ORD research portfolio. This includes recent hiring actions to bring in a new cohort of social scientists who will be deployed in multiple Centers and geographic locations.

- (1). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer regarding ORD's progress to date in building social science capacity to address critical environmental challenges?**
- (2). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer to improve the effectiveness of ORD's approaches to integrating social science into its broader research portfolio involving physical, chemical, and biological sciences, computational sciences, and engineering?**
- (3). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer to support social scientists in ORD?**

Question B: Charge Questions for the BOSC Climate Change Subcommittee

ORD has continued to implement actions to build its climate change research capacity and to integrate climate change as a key cross-cutting topic across the overall ORD research portfolio. This includes recent actions to create an organizational center of gravity for interdisciplinary climate science.

- (1). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer regarding ORD's progress to date in building interdisciplinary climate science capacity to address the twin critical environmental challenges of climate and environmental justice?**
- (2). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer to improve the effectiveness of ORD's approaches to integrate climate sciences across its broader research portfolio?**

(3). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer to support the three core initiatives of the new Division, namely: regional support, climate assessments, and evaluation?

Question C: Charge Questions for the Combined BOSC Social and Community Science and Climate Change Subcommittees

To address critical environmental challenges such as climate change, environmental justice issues, and cumulative impacts, ORD is expanding the use of community-engaged research methods such as co-production, which require place-based investments in research. Due to logistical and resource constraints, it will not be possible to conduct these place-based studies in large numbers of locations. For long-term program sustainability, it is critical that research results from these place-based studies be structured to inform regional and national policies.

(1). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer on how to design and implement place-based research so that it can be scaled to generate generalizable insights that are: (a) useful for informing state, regional, or national level decision-making; and (b) useful and accessible to our local research partners and other communities?

(2). What suggestion(s) or recommendation(s) does the Subcommittee offer on the role of place-based research in developing the science of climate adaptation and mitigation?

(3). What suggestions does the BOSC have for additional positional, recognition, or ethical factors particular to community-engaged research, and for best practices to building trust with local partners?